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AN

ANSWER

TO "A

SHORT ESSAY.

(Price One Shilling and Six-pence.)

AN ANSWER TO "A SHORT ESSAY ON THE MODES OF DEFENCE BEST ADAPTED TO THE SITUATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS ISLAND."

In pace ut Sapiens, aptarit idonea bello. Hor.

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ANSWER, &c.

IF the Author of the *Short Eſſay on the Modes of Defence beſt adapted to the Situation and Circumſtances of this Iſland*, had confined himſelf to the very harmleſs, though illiberal ſpleen, he has ſhewn againſt the preſent Maſter General of the Ordnance, his performance would not have deſerved an anſwer; but when ideas of the moſt dangerous tendency to the very exiſtence of the ſtate are attempted to be impoſed on the public, are ſupported by miſrepreſentation, and recommended by the tempting lure of œconomy, it becomes neceſſary that they ſhould be refuted, and that the nation ſhould not be lulled into a fatal confidence in the preſent defences of our naval arſenals, and

neglect the happy opportunity which a time of peace can alone afford of putting them in a permanent ſtate of ſecurity.

The principal points endeavoured to be eſtabliſhed in the ſhort eſſay may be reduced to the following heads, *viz.*

1. That few countries are better adapted than England to a defenſive war. (page 23.)

2. That the coaſt of Great Britain is too extenſive to be fortified againſt a landing or invaſion. (page 33.)

3. That it is impolitic to convert our whole active ſtrength into a ſtationary one confined in fortreſſes inſtead of having it at command to act in the field. (page 33.)

4. That a powerful and well-appointed navy is neceſſary to retain any foreign poſſeſſion, or to carry on an extenſive commerce, and ought to be the firſt and principal object of our attention. (page 33.)

5. That

5. That againſt armaments calculated only for occaſional and deſultory aſſaults, works of very limited extent are ſufficient. (page 19.)

6. That the deſtroying a dock yard by means of ſhells, red hot ſhot, &c. is an imaginary and groundleſs notion. (page 35.)

7. That the deſtruction of a dock yard can never be an object to an enemy aiming at conqueſt, who will naturally wiſh to leave undemoliſhed what he expects to ſee his own, and to receive it as intire as poſſible. (page 21.)

8. That large and extenſive fortifications are not proportioned to our military eſtabliſhment. (page 34.)

9. That the expence of fortifying Portſmouth and Plymouth, on the preſent extenſive plan, will coſt £.2,366,271, be 47 years in compleating, and that 50 or 60 thouſand men will be wanted to defend them. (pages 45, 51, 76.)

10. That

10. That theſe extenſive fortifications are not only unneceſſary, but extremely dangerous; as the enemy, getting poſſeſſion of the propoſed line of works, would be enabled to hold a principal poſt and harbour in this country, without running any riſk, or expoſing himſelf to the ſmalleſt degree of danger, as long as he is maſter of the ſea, in ſpite of any attempt that we could make to diſlodge him. (pages 34, 83.)

The firſt of theſe points, *that few countries are better adapted than England to a defenſive war*, will not be diſputed; and the full extent of the reaſoning (which takes up 32 pages in the ſhort eſſay) to prove, that the ſyſtem of procraſtinating defence, adopted by Fabius and Waſhington, although it cannot be admitted to be new, will be allowed to be juſt. But the great natural ſtrength of the country and its numberleſs reſources, which are by no means over-rated, do not ſeem very naturally to lead to the idea ſuggeſted in page 21, that an enemy may come *with the ſerious intention and ſettled expectation of conquering the country*; *that the bombard-*

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ment of a dock yard could be no object to ſuch an enemy, but that on the contrary *he would wiſh to leave undemoliſhed and entire what he expects to ſee his own.* The natural inference to be drawn from the infallible ſucceſs promiſed from a defenſive war, and in ſo ſtrong a country, would be, that an enemy will not attempt a conqueſt in which he muſt fail; but will attempt the deſtruction of a dock yard in which he may ſucceed.

The conſervation of our dock yards ſeems, however, to be an object of little importance to the author of the Short Eſſay, who in page 18, ſays, *The preſervation of dock yards, fortifications, &c. muſt in caſes of extremity yield to publick neceſſity*; and in page 22 (ſpeaking of the *firing of our dock yards)* adds, *it will prove on our part a loſs that is only partial, and cannot endanger the general ſafety, or involve in its conſequences the fate of the nation at large.* God forbid that ſuch notions as theſe ſhould prevail! If the obſervation of this writer, page 33, *that the retaining any foreign poſſeſſions, or the carrying on extenſive commerce, depends on our having a powerful*

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and well appointed navy, be true; the deſtruction of our dock yards, which contain the vitals neceſſary for the exiſtence of that navy, muſt with their loſs involve the fate of the nation at large.

I will be bold to ſay, that the conqueſt of the iſland itſelf, if poſſible to be obtained, would ſcarcely be a more deſirable object to an enemy than the annihilation of our naval power. The wiſe policy of modern times does not extend to the romantic ſchemes of conquering great nations, it confines itſelf to the more practicable operation of weakening and crippling its adverſaries; and the ambitious views of our enemies would be as well ſatisfied in reducing England to an inſignificant and dependant ſtate, as in having it a troubleſome province.

The ſecond point, *That the coaſt of Great Britain is too extenſive to be fortified againſt a landing or invaſion*, is alſo fully admitted; but the concluſion to be drawn from thence is againſt the late ſyſtem, of fortifying ſo many places on our extenſive coaſt as were begun upon in the laſt war,

war, not againſt the preſent ſyſtem which means to confine future works to the principal dock yards.

The impoſſibility of defending ſo many fortified places with the forces which this country can afford, and the danger of their getting into the hands of the enemy, may furniſh reaſons for blaming the expenſive works began on the heights of Dover, the Flats of Graveſend, or the extenſive projects for Sheerneſs, Landguard Port, and North Yarmouth Coaſt, which were all begun during the laſt war, and which have coſt this nation upward of £.200,000: none of which are a quarter finiſhed, or when compleated could afford the ſmalleſt ſecurity for our principal dock yards: but theſe reaſons do not apply to the preſent Maſter General, who, abandoning ſuch extravagant ſchemes, confines his future works to the defence of the principal dock yards.

The third point, *That it is impolitic to convert our whole active ſtrength into a ſtationary one, confined in fortreſſes, inſtead of having it at command to act in the field,* is

is perfectly true. But it is begging the queſtion, to aſſume that the works propoſed by the preſent Maſter General will confine in fortreſſes the whole or even any diſproportional part of the moveable ſtrength of the country; and the writer of the Short Eſſay argues from very narrow principles and falſe premiſes, when he takes it for an agreed point, (page 5,) that the military eſtabliſhment of the ſtate muſt continue invariable. Experience contradicts this ſuppoſition. The regular military force of this kingdom has greatly encreaſed ſince King William's time, when 7000 men was our eſtabliſhment in time of peace, and we have now 23000; but the ſudden increaſe of an eſtabliſhment of 30,000 militia, in the year 1755, proves that the nation can, as it ought, ſupply a degree of force proportionate to its exigencies.

If the preſervation of our dock yards is of the importance I have deſcribed, a force adequate to their defence muſt be provided; and this may be the more eaſily procured, as but a ſmall proportion of regulars is neceſſary. The militia of the neighbour-

neighbouring counties, in the excellent order they had attained during the laſt war, are fully adequate, under able officers, to ſuch a ſervice, and the readineſs with which at leaſt 20,000 volunteers from Devonſhire and Cornwall, offered to aſſemble in a few days for the defence of Plymouth, when the combined fleets of France and Spain conſiſting of 63 ſail of the line were off that port in 1779, is an evident proof that regulations might eaſily be formed for eſtabliſhing an occaſional militia for the defence of our dock yards, fully ſufficient, with a ſmall proportion of regulars, to man any works that may be neceſſary for their defence.

The fourth point is, *That a powerful and well appointed navy is neceſſary to retain any foreign poſſeſſion, or to carry on an extenſive commerce, and ought to be the firſt and principal object of our attention.*

This opinion alſo is not very new, and will very readily be acquieſced in by every man who has ever thought on the ſubject. It has already been obſerved, that if our navy is an important conſideration, the

preſervation of the magazines, ſtores, and docks, from whence that navy is ſupplied is eſſential; but fortifications that will render the naval depots ſecure againſt any attempt of an enemy, operate ſtill further and in another way. It has been contended by ſome perſons that our ſhips are ſufficient to protect our ſea ports, and that a channel fleet or weſtern ſquadron muſt always be equal to ſuch a purpoſe. It is not neceſſary for the preſent argument to examine into the dependence that is to be placed on the protection which the dock yards may derive from a fleet; nor to enquire in what manner, whilſt its attention may be drawn to any point from the North Sea to Cape Clear, it can command the winds and guard the remainder of our extenſive coaſt. For the ſake of argument it ſhall be admitted, that a good fleet in the channel can defend all our dock yards; but it muſt alſo be admitted, that this fleet muſt remain at home to afford this defence. Whilſt we were maſters of the ſea we could ſupply ſhips enough to protect all our foreign poſſeſſions, to attack thoſe of the enemy, and either keep a great fleet at home,

home, or be ſure that the enemy had none left in their ports capable of inſulting our coaſts, but the naval power of Great Britain, compared with that of its neighbours, has experienced a ſad reverſe. The fatal American war has enabled the navies of France and Spain to encreaſe, ſo as greatly to out-number ours; and the wretched councils of thoſe times, has transferred the naval power of Holland from our alliance, to that of France. Our next war, muſt therefore, probably be carried on with a fleet inferior to thoſe of our enemies; and, although our foreign poſſeſſions are diminiſhed in number, thoſe that remain, are not leſs diſtant or more connected together. Newfoundland, Quebec, Nova Scotia, the Leeward Iſlands, Jamaica, Gibraltar, the Coaſt of Africa, and the Eaſt Indies, with the convoying our trade out and home, and the neceſſary cruiſers againſt the enemy, will find full employment for our fleet, which muſt in every quarter expect to meet a ſuperior force. But a continued defenſive war muſt be ruinous; and if we are to carry on offenſive

ſive operations, we ſhall ſoon want every exertion that our navy can make. The keeping a ſquadron at home for channel ſervice, is in ſo much a diminution of our fleet; and the reaſoning of the writer of the Short Eſſay on the bad policy of a ſtationary land force, on the advantages of its being wholly active and moveable, apply with real truth to our navy. The extent of our marine force is, and muſt be limited: we can build and man but a certain number of ſhips: our utmoſt exertions have never been able to exceed 100 ſail of the line; and in proportion, as the force we keep at home for the protection of our docks is great, that which we have for foreign ſervice, muſt be ſmall. Fortifications therefore that can ſo ſecure our dock yards as to make them ſafe againſt any attempt of our enemies whilſt our fleets are abroad, not only preſerve the ſources of our naval power, but actually give us the uſe of ſo many more ſhips for active ſervice, as muſt, without thoſe works, be kept at home ſtationary for the protection of our naval arſenals. It is preſumed, that not leſs than ten ſail of the line could be allotted for the defence

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of the channel if the dock yards are left liable to inſult. But if they are rendered ſecure by fortifications, an addition of theſe ten ſail of the line is thereby given to our naval force; and ſuppoſing them to be on an average, 74 gun ſhips, their value at the ordinary calculation of £.1000 *per* gun, will be £.740,000, which is more than theſe fortifications will coſt. But a much more important conſideration than the money is, that we thereby get an additional force, which we could not poſſibly acquire by any other means.

The 5th point is, *that againſt armaments, calculated only for occaſional and deſultory aſſaults; works of a very limited extent, are ſufficient.*

This propoſition might be true, if we could anſwer for the ſmallneſs of the armanents which our enemies may employ: if we could be ſure, that they will not bring over mortars or heavy artillery: and that they will never catch us off our guard. But when we recollect, that within this century, the Britiſh forces have taken Minorca, Gibraltar and Belles Iſle;

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have attacked Vigo, beſieged Cadiz and Toulon, and deſtroyed the Baſon at Cherbourg, let us not be too ſure, that armaments calculated only for occaſional and deſultory aſſaults, are all we may expect!

The 6th point is, *that deſtroying a dock yard by means of ſhells, and red hot ſhot, &c. is an imaginary and groundleſs notion; and, that the deſtruction of a dock yard, can never be an object to an enemy aiming at conqueſt, who will naturally wiſh to leave undemoliſhed what he expects to ſee his own, and to receive it as entire as poſſible.*

The author has thought it worth his while to beſtow a whole ſection of his work to prove this aſſertion. He compares the prevalence of the opinion of the danger of a bombardment, to a panic or phrenzy that eſcaping all enquiry ſeizes on the minds and apprehenſions of mankind; he repreſents it as the offspring of irreſolution and timidity, incapable of bearing the teſt of reaſon. Let us then try it by this teſt, and ſee how this wonderful author ſupports his opinion with reaſons.

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In the firſt place, he tells us, that what is of maſonry and under-ground, cannot be ſet fire to. So far in the abſtract is true. We ſhall hereafter ſee how far it is true in the application. In the next place, he admits, that the *ſtores of a dock yard*, are in a different predicament. They it ſeems *may* be burnt. But then he comforts himſelf with the recollection, that *if ruined, they can be much more eaſily replaced than permanent works.* Perhaps they may. The rebuilding dry docks, and reſervoirs, may require eight or ten years; and the getting a freſh ſupply of all the maſts, yards, hemp, pitch, ſails, cordage, and ſeaſoned timber, that form the neceſſary proviſion for our naval arſenals, may not require above four or five; provided always that the markets can in that time ſupply the quantity, and that the deſtruction of theſe ſtores does not entirely prevent the refitting of our ſhips, and thereby eſtabliſh ſuch a ſuperiority in favour of the enemy, as will enable him to prevent our receiving during the continuance of the war any further ſupply of ſtores whatever.

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But the author ſeems ſenſible, that this ſort of comfort will not be quite ſatisfactory to his readers; he therefore propoſes plans for preventing the deſtruction of theſe ſtores. *Timber, ſails, cordage, amd other inflameable ſubſtances, are to be floated or ſunk in ſuch a manner as to be raiſed again when the inveſtiture is over.* This ſcheme is certainly perfect; but whether from the doubt of having time for this operation, or from fear that hemp and gun powder may receive ſome damage under water, or from what other reaſon I know not, but our contriving author is not ſatisfied with this expedient, and therefore, propoſes another, *which is to run up bomb proofs on the ſpur of the occaſion for particular ſtores, by placing logs, with a pretty ſteep pitch againſt one another, which* (he ſays) *will effectually throw off any ſhells or carcaſſes whatever.* What a pity it is, that this infallible invention had not come to light ſooner! How much money would it not have ſaved to the nations of Europe in expenſive caſemates, which from miſtaken experience, and the nonſenſe of that ignorant fellow Vauban, they have fancied,

fancied, could not reſiſt the effect of heavy ſhells, unleſs covered by an arch of maſonry three feet thick, and with at leaſt five feet of earth upon that arch! No doubt but this new diſcovery has been made by ſome promiſing lad, who in ſome famous ſiege of a block-houſe in the wilds of America, has found the good effects of theſe logs againſt hand grenades; and from thence, very logically infers that by an increaſed proportionate *ratio* in their thickneſs they will reſiſt 13 inch ſhells. However, ſome difficulty has ſtill occurred to our author, viz. *that red-hot ſhot may ſet fire to theſe logs*; but he is never at a loſs for an expedient, he *ſurrounds them on thoſe parts which can be ſeen by the enemy, with earth, ſtones, bricks, and other materials that are not combuſtible, which* (he aſſures us) *are always to be found in ſuch places in ſufficient abundance for the purpoſe.* Nothing ſo eaſy as ſuch a conſtruction! and the bare aſſertion, that *even veſſels on the ſtocks may, with a little contrivance, be effectually ſecured both againſt ſhot and ſhells*, muſt carry conviction with it! It would, how-

ever, have been more ſatisfactory to a leſs lively imagination, if he had deſcribed the manner of covering theſe ſhips, the ſpace that is to be found in the confined ſpot of a dock yard, for theſe hovels of logs, the quantity of ſtores they would contain, how many million of bricks, thouſand tons of ſtone, or cubic yards of earth, would be wanted to cover them, the time it would take to conſtruct theſe buildings, and to remove the ſtores from the preſent magazines into them. But inſtead of explaining theſe particulars, he has only aſſured us, that all theſe plans may be carried into execution *during the time that the enemy is diſembarking his troops, landing his artillery, bringing it up, and completing his batteries.* But ſtill the author ſeems to feel ſome doubt of having ſufficiently provided for the ſecurity of theſe combuſtible ſtores; for he adds, *that there ſeems no good reaſon or neceſſity for having any greater quantity of them in the dock yards than what is abſolutely neceſſary for immediate uſe, and ſome occaſional ſupplies.* He therefore propoſes, that when the ſhips are ſupplied for a certain

certain time, the remainder ſhall be ſent out of the enemies reach to more *inland depots*.

This ſcheme of *inland depots* for naval ſtores is worthy of its ingenious author, and no doubt muſt be a very œconomical plan, in as much as two depots, and two eſtabliſhments of perſons to take charge of them, muſt be cheaper than one, and double land carriage coſts nothing! But there ſeems yet to be ſome little inconveniency attending theſe *inland depots*, as well as the whole of this plan of defence. The writer of the ſhort eſſay aſſerts, that *if the attack is of a ſubordinate, inferior, and ſecondary nature, a bombardment cannot take place; and if from an army that has conqueſt in view, a partial deſtruction of the combuſtible or periſhable ſtores in a dock yard will not be an object.* But ſuppoſe an enemy in force, from whom alone a bombardment can be feared, ſhould be of a different opinion from this author; and not chuſing to purſue wild ſchemes of conqueſt which this author has demon-

ſtrated to be impracticable, ſhould ſatisfy himſelf with the deſtruction of a dock yard; how will he be prevented from demoliſhing the ſtores both in the *inland depot* and in the yards themſelves? If this *inland depot* is within ten or a dozen miles of the dock yard, it will probably be within reach of the enemy in force, and will be eaſily ſeized, unleſs the *depot* itſelf is covered by a fortification; and if it is further up the country, the double land carriage may begin to be expenſive. The ſtores, therefore, in the *inland depots*, within diſtance of being uſeful, will be deſtroyed by an enemy in force; and thoſe alſo within a dock yard covered by works of ſmall extent would ſoon be loſt. The experiment tried at Gibraltar has proved the irreſiſtible effects of red-hot ſhot wherever there is timber, and all the *ingenious* contrivances we have been examining will not prevent the total demolition of the buildings, and a general conflagration of all the combuſtible ſtores in a dock yard, in a very ſhort time after the batteries begin to play.

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But this is not all; an enemy in force, whilſt he was ſetting fire to the yard, would at the ſame time be puſhing on his ſiege; and it is well known, that if he has a ſmall garriſon, to deal with, ſhut up in little works, without any peculiar advantage from ſituation, the time they can hold out will be calculated to a day, and the place muſt be taken. Then all the baſons, docks, ſluices, and permanent buildings, will be blown up, and the whole arſenal utterly demoliſhed! Small works with an inconſiderable force, altho' they may reſiſt againſt a coup de main, cannot protect the principal dock yards of this kingdom againſt an enemy in force; and if more extenſive works and a larger garriſon can afford ſuch protection, it may poſſibly appear to the public more advantageous to have that ſecurity, than to fly to that admirable expedient propoſed by this author *of deſtroying the ſtores ourſelves rather than let them fall into the enemy's hands.* But the author is ſo inveterate againſt the propoſed new works, that he declares *we had better deſtroy every year ten times more than a bombardment can do, than go to the expence*

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of the extenſive line of fortifications. If report ſays true, the defenceleſs ſtate of Plymouth in 1779 had nearly afforded him the ſatisfaction of knowing what the conſequences of ſuch a deſtruction would be; as it is ſaid, that an officer of high rank, heſitated whether he ſhould himſelf ſet fire to the dock, or leave it to be deſtroyed by the Comte D'orvillers.

The ſeventh point is, *that the expence of fortifying Portſmouth and Plymouth, on the preſent extenſive plan, will coſt £.2,366,271, be 47 years in compleating, and require 47 or 50 thouſand men to defend them.* Page 45, 51, 76.

In regard to the expence of theſe works, the author of the Short Eſſay ſays, that *the preſent Maſter General has repeatedly pledged himſelf in ſome meaſure to fortify and ſecure both Portſmouth and Plymouth for £.500,000.* The pledge ſuppoſed to be referred to, is to be found in the Report on the Eſtimate of the Ordnance for 1783, which he gave to Parliament, in which, ſpeaking of *future works*, he ſays, " It

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" is *computed* that to render Portſmouth " and Plymouth compleat, will require " 4 or 500,000 l. which at 50,000 l. per " annum, will be done in eight or ten " years."

The very looſe mode of expreſſion of 4 or 500,000 l. clearly proves that this computation could be meant to convey only very general ideas of the *ſort of expence* to be incurred, and could never be conſidered as an eſtimate founded on exact calculations; nor can ſuch be expected in a buſineſs of this kind. Before a correct eſtimate can be made, detailed plans and ſections of each work, and of all its ſeveral parts muſt be formed: but the plans themſelves cannot be finally ſettled, until the ground on which they are to ſtand is purchaſed, the trees and hedges cut down, the banks and ditches cleared, and the level of the country in different directions accurately taken. Then, and then only, can the engineer, by trying various plans on the ground itſelf, take the beſt advantage of it; not only in point of ſtrength, but in point of

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œconomy; for even in countries apparently flat there is always ſome difference of level. A ſaliant angle may fall in a hollow, and by changing the direction of ſome parts of a plan, a difference of a few feet may make a ſaving of many thouſand pounds. A *regular* plan neatly drawn, may have a very pretty appearance on the Table of the Board of Ordnance, but it can never be really a *good* plan till it is laid out in full dimenſions on the ground, and every part of it adapted to the ſituation. When all is duly conſidered and fixed, an eſtimate may be made; but even then, that eſtimate may not prove correct: untill the ground is every where opened, it muſt remain uncertain to what depth it will be neceſſary to go for a good foundation; nor can it be aſcertained until the work is actually executing, what the nature of the ſoil may be, whether hard rock, gravel, clay, or ſand, through which ſuch great excavations are to be made. At the new works round the dock at Portſmouth, the engineer was obliged to carry his foundation in ſome places 20 feet deep

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to ſupport his eſcarp wall of only 16 feet high, and this in ſome degree accounts for the expenditure having exceeded the eſtimate at that place as mentioned in the Short Eſſay. A conſiderable latitude muſt therefore be left even on detailed eſtimates, and a ſtill greater on rough computations; but it would indeed be an abuſe of all ſenſe and reaſon if inſtead of the computation of £.500,000 for new works at Portſmouth and Plymouth, they ſhould coſt near five times that ſum, as is roundly aſſerted in the Short Eſſay.

But let us examine the articles on which this pretended calculation is formed, and compare them with thoſe which the Maſter General and Board of Ordnance have given into the Houſe of Commons, founded upon eſtimates and computations made by the Committee of Engineers at the Tower.*

* Note, The Committee conſiſted of Major General Bramham, Colonel Brewſe, Lieut. Colonel Spry, Lieut. Colonel Morſe, and Major D'Aubant, and they were aſſiſted in this buſineſs by Colonel Dixon, Major General Roy, and Lieut. Colonel Moncrief.

The information which the author of the Short Eſſay ſays he has procured from the moſt *unqueſtionable authority* reſpecting the plans of his Grace of Richmond, is as follows:

That ſince he began to alter a work in the Goſport diviſion, commonly called Fort Monckton, there have been granted, viz. £.11,000 for the year 1783, and £.10,000 for 1784; and that for completing it there will ſtill be wanted - - - - -	21,000	0	0
	50,000	0	0
That on account of it, and a large pentagonal work intended to be erected near Stoke's Bay Houſe; and a moraſs called Gomer Pond Lands, have been lately purchaſed to the amount of - - -	11,757	0	0

That

The information given into the Houſe of Commons by the Maſter General and Board of Ordnance of the probable amount of the expence that will be incurred in erecting new works for the defence of Portſmouth and Plymouth is to the following effect.

For compleating Fort Monkton - - - -	42,407	12	3½
For lands at Stokes Bay, including thoſe on which Fort Monkton ſtands, and arrears of rent for five years -	11,747	16	7¾

The

That beſides theſe there muſt ſtill be purchaſed for the inundation, and two other large works, with ſome intermediate ſmall ones, to form a line of defence from thence acroſs to the harbour at Frater Lake, Lands to the amount of - - - - - 25,000 0 0

That the ſaid pentagonal work, if executed upon the ſcale propoſed, will, by the moſt moderate eſtimate that can reaſonably be made for it, coſt at leaſt - - - - - - - - 135,000 0 0

That, ſuppoſing the other two capital points of this line to be made equally ſtrong with the ſaid poſition at the Bay-houſe, the works which muſt reſpectively occupy them, will coſt as follows, viz. the one at Frater Lake - - - - - - - 160,000 0 0

The land wanted at Frater Lake, not being ſo much as has been purchaſed for Stokes Bay it is imagined cannot exceed - - -	10,000 0 0
For a fort near Stokes Bay, traced on the ground and eſtimated from meaſurement at - -	135,970 13 11
For a fort near Frater Lake, computed from the above eſtimate at - -	110,000 0 0

And the other near Rowner, Church at the ſaliant angle of the line, which is of courſe the tendereſt and weakeſt part of it - - - - - - - -	180,000	0	0
That for the intermediate works between theſe principal points, whenever they ſhall be erected, there cannot well be allowed leſs than - - -	26,000	0	0
That for the ſluices, inundations, dams, and ditches for the ſame, têtes des ponts, bridges, and paſſages of communication, &c. there will be wanted - - - - - -	20,000	0	0
That the ordnance expence of the ſea wall, now erecting at Haſlar Hoſpital, will amount to - -	10,000	0	0
Total £. for the Goſport diviſion.	638,757	0	0

The fort near Rowner Church deemed unneceſſary from the two before mentioned being made ſo much ſtronger than at firſt intended - - ———————

None are intended, If any ſhould be found neceſſary, they can only be field works - - - - - ———————

What are neceſſary are included in the foregoing computations. - - - ———————

The real expence has already been paid by parliament.

That at Plymouth there is likewiſe to be a line of defence formed from Mount Edgecombe to Tar Point, and occupied chiefly in like manner by three principal works; that the firſt of theſe on the left of the line is to be erected on Mount Edgecombe, with a ſmall work advanced from it, for the purpoſe of looking along and ſcouring a pretty deep ravine; that the ſecond or central work is to be near the King's brewery; and that the third, on the right of the line, is to be conſtructed on Mr. Carey's pleaſure-ground and bowling-green; which, with the mutual communications between them neceſſary for rendering the defence advantageous and connected, &c. &c. will coſt at leaſt as much as the Goſport diviſion, viz. 638,757 0 0

For a fort on the heights of Maker with detached works - - -	100,000	0	0
For land purchaſed for the ſaid fort - - - -	13,945	7	6
For a fort at Merryfield with detached works -	90,000	0	0
For the purchaſe of land for the ſaid fort, probably the ſame quantity, and of the ſame value as on Maker Heights - -	14,000	0	0

That in the Portſmouth diviſion there is to be a large work erected near the middle of the preſent Portſea Lines; that South Sea Caſtle is to be pulled down, and a work conſtructed on the ground, a little way retired behind it; and that there are alterations and additions to be made at and near Cumberland Fort, &c. which together, independent of the ſums ſtill wanted for compleating the new works rouud *Common*, will coſt at leaſt - - 300,000 0 0

Total £.1,577514 0 0

for the three diviſions.

For a fort near Hilsea lines - - - - - - -	100,000	0	0
For land wanted for this fort - - - - -	5,000	0	0
For re-building South Sea Castle - - - -	6,700	0	0
For alterations and improvements deemed necessary at Cumberland Fort - - - - - -	25,000	0	0
Total for the three divisions - - - - - £.	692,562	1	5

Now, if we ſeriouſly conſider, that eſtimates for works in general, fall greatly ſhort of the actual expence of execution, we may reaſonably enough add to the preceding amount, one half of itſelf; which addition will give us the enormous ſum of £.2,366,271.

The computation given in by the Maſter General, and Board of Ordnance, made by ſo reſpectable a committee of engineers, though certainly not a correct eſtimate, is probably not founded on ſuch looſe materials as to make it neceſſary to add one half of itſelf, or to authoriſe them to ſtate any addition for errors they are not aware of;

Between - -	£.2,366,271
And - - -	692,562
The difference is -	£.1,673,709

in which the author of the Short Eſſay is out in his calculation, if the official report of the Maſter General and Board of Ordnance is at all juſt, and the calculations of the committee of engineers well founded.

The whole expence for the purchaſe of lands, for reforming the defects of old fortifications in ſome places, the rebuilding them in others, and the finiſhing them, are all included in this report of the Maſter General and Board of Ordnance. But there is no reaſon for ſup-

mance

poſing that any of theſe articles were included in the computation of four or five hundred thouſand pounds, made by the Maſter General in 1782, for new works; The value of lands depending on what neighbours may be got to ſwear to, and on what juries may chooſe to give, could not be included in that calculation; and ſince the time of Queen Anne, the purchaſe of lands for the Ordnance, has always been voted, and paid for in a ſeperate bill of compenſation, but never appeared in any eſtimate.

The reforming the defects of Fort Monkton, rebuilding South Sea Caſtle, and completing the works near Portſmouth Common, on a reduced plan, can have alſo no relation to a computation for new works. Upon the old ſyſtem, theſe expences muſt equally have been incurred, or probably in a higher degree; eſpecially in the works near Portſmouth Common, which muſt be made as ſtrong as poſſible, if Portſea Iſland itſelf remains no better defended than it is at preſent. The eſtimate for finiſhing them upon the original plan, was above £.100,000, it is now

now reduced to £.27,000; and therefore, the ſavings of £.72,000, on this article, ought to be reckoned in diminution of the new works. But not reckoning this, the only exceeding of the rough computation of the five hundred thouſand pounds made by the Duke of Richmond, for the new works, is, about £.36,000; which upon correct eſtimates now made of ſome parts, and the means thoſe eſtimates afford of computing the remainder with more accuracy, cannot ſurely be deemed a very great error in a computation ſo made, and upon ſo large a ſum.

It is true, that on the Goſport ſide, there are now two forts inſtead of three originally intended. But it makes no difference in the calculation, if it is judged preferable now to lay out on the two forts, the expence which was originally intended for the three. The importance of the poſts at Stokes Bay, and Frater Lake, certainly demand the utmoſt attention; the ground near Stokes Bay, ſeems to require the extenſion which has been made in the plan; and the great ſtrength given

given to theſe two forts, by a compleat revetement and counter-ſcarp in maſonry, caſemated double flanks, magazines, ſtore-houſes, and lodging for the whole garriſon, (all bomb proof) beſides barracks, will make the two flanks on the Goſport ſide, ſo ſecure, as in the opinion of many able officers, to render the intermediate work near Rowner church unneceſſary. For, as the line of approach between them, will be croſſed by the fire of theſe forts, and the whole ſpace within them, expoſed to the fire of ſome of the interior works, it will be impoſſible for an enemy to remain there, and carry on any ſerious operation with artillery under ſuch diſadvantages, and at ſo great a diſtance as he muſt be from his main body. No intermediate works, therefore, ſeem neceſſary; but if it ſhould be thought otherwiſe, a few field works, might be conſtructed at a very trifling expence when wanted, and ſupported by two ſuch reſpectable forts, would fully anſwer every purpoſe. Should, however, the further precaution of a more permanent work in that ſituation, ever be deemed adviſeable, it may at

any

any time be erected, and the expence cannot exceed that at Frater Lake.

The idea of the author of the Short Eſſay, that a third work of any magnitude was intended near the Brewhouſe at Plymouth, does not appear to have any grounds, but, in his imagination; any man with military ideas, who looks at the ſpot, muſt immediately be convinced, that the intended works on the Heights of Maker ſo command the narrow neck of that Iſthmus, as to make it quite unneceſſary to place a work of importance there.

But the article of £. 10,000 for the wall, near Haſlar Hoſpital at Portſmouth, is a good ſpecimen of the manner in which the author has calculated. Money has already been voted for this ſervice, and it has nothing to do with new works.

The computation of forty-ſeven years, which this writer ſtates it will take to build theſe works, requires but a very few words of refutation. The execution in reſpect to time, muſt depend on the ſums

that are granted in each year. If it ſhould be thought adviſeable, that the whole ſhould be completed as ſoon as poſſible, there is no reaſon why each work ſhould not be puſhed on at the ſame time, and the whole might certainly be finiſhed in three or four years.

The manner in which the author of the Short Eſſay makes his calculation for the number of men neceſſary for the defence of the extenſive plan of works propoſed by the preſent Maſter General is curious. After reaſoning on the practicability of an enemy's landing to the weſtward of Plymouth, and of the importance which the poſts on Maker Heights, and Tor Point, would be of to him, he objects againſt ſtrong works to keep an enemy out of theſe poſts, and then in a lumping way, aſſerts that leſs than 15,000 cannot reaſonably be alloted for this purpoſe. He next ſtates, that the ground to the eaſtward of Plymouth, *is in reality almoſt not fortifiable:* that if it was, it would require 25,000 men at leaſt to defend the works that would be neceſſary to be there erected. May be

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ſo; but it is rather hard to charge this 25,000 men to the account of the Duke of Richmond's plan of works, who never intended any for that ſide.

The author afterwards proceeds to compute the number of men wanted for Portſmouth. He ſtates the garriſons for the works on the Goſport ſide, to be 3,900: that there muſt be double that number behind them; that is, in all about 12,000 men for the Goſport ſide; and without any detail, he adds 10,000 for Portſea Iſland: a little after, he ſays, *that* 47 *or* 50 *thouſand will barely ſuffice for the defence of Portſmouth and Plymouth*; and a few lines lower, he extends them *to* 50 *or* 60,000 *that will be wanted.*

It is very true, that Portſmouth and Plymouth require large garriſons, for a reaſon which has eſcaped the author of this Short Eſſay, which is, that an enemy may create jealouſies on each ſide of the water, and oblige us to divide our force. This may, perhaps, render us on either ſide, too weak to prevent a landing; and, if there are not afterwards ſufficient works

to

to ſtop the enemy, that landing may be deciſive of the fate of the dock yard. But if there are ſufficient works to ſtop him, when he has decided his ſide of attack and begins to land his artillery, we may then reinforce that ſide from the other with ſafety. Let us for inſtance ſuppoſe the two intended forts to the weſtward of Plymouth to require 1,000 men each; there may then be 6000 to relieve them, or to act offenſively againſt the enemies approaches on that ſide, and 4000 ſtill left to keep a look out to the eaſtward; and the whole garriſon will be but 12,000 men. If the attack is on the eaſtward ſide of Plymouth, 500 men in each of the two forts to the weſtward; and 1000 men to keep a look out, will be fully ſufficient on that ſide, and there will be 10,000 men, beſides what may be collected from the country to oppoſe an enemy attempting to force his way to the eaſtward. In the ſame manner, if an enemy lands to the weſtward of Portſmouth, and the two forts at Stokes Bay and Frater Lake, are attacked, there will be a garriſon of 1000 men for each; 500 for fort Monckton, and a corps of 5000 men in the

the rear to ſupport them, beſides 2000 men for the forts on the ſouth ſide of Portſea Iſland, and 500 for the fort at Hilſea, all which amount only to 10,000 men. Beſides theſe garriſons, the dock men, and the aſſiſtance of the country, which can at all times get into the place, afford a great additional ſtrength.

The Maſter General and Board of Ordnance have ſtated that about 22,000 men, with the additional aſſiſtance before mentioned, may be ſufficient for both places, and perhaps their ideas may be deemed as weighty as the unſupported aſſertions of an anonimous writer.

The 10th article is, *That theſe extenſive fortifications are not only unneceſſary but extremely dangerous, as an enemy getting poſſeſſion of the propoſed line of works would be enabled to hold a principal poſt and harbour in this country, without running any riſk or expoſing himſelf to the ſmalleſt degree of danger if he is maſter of the ſea, in ſpite of any attempt we could make to diſlodge him.*

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An enemy's getting poſſeſſion of a principal port and harbour in this country is moſt readily accorded to be a great miſchief. The very point in queſtion is only how it may be beſt prevented?

The argument againſt extenſive fortifications is worth attention. They become dangerous, it is ſaid, becauſe if an enemy gets poſſeſſion of them he can the better hold them; but this reaſoning ſeems to go more to their ſtrength than to their extent. Don't make your works too ſtrong againſt your enemy, leſt if you ſhould loſe them they ſhould be too ſtrong againſt you! with equal good ſenſe he might have ſaid, do not build ſhips of war, leaſt when taken they ſhould encreaſe your enimies navy. But let us come a little cloſer to the point. However ſuperior an invading force may be at the moment, the country attacked muſt ſoon regain that ſuperiority if it has but time to collect its force; and that force can be much more eaſily ſupplied with neceſſaries of all kinds than the enemy, who muſt tranſport moſt of them from his own country. The great object therefore to be obtained, is

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to preſerve theſe dock yards by fortifications till the ſtrength of the country can aſſemble. But ſmall works with a ſmall garriſon, are certainly leſs able to reſiſt the temporary ſuperiority of the enemy, than ſtronger works and a more numerous garriſon; the latter will therefore be moſt likely to prevent a dock yard from falling into the enemies hands, which is by much a more important conſideration than the recovering it. And even for this purpoſe we ſhall have the advantage; becauſe when we are to drive the enemy out of any poſt he has retired to, the ſuperiority in our favour muſt be much greater for the retaking that place, than it could have been in his favour in the attack of it. Independent of this, can it ſeriouſly be adviſed that we ſhould avoid making the defences of all the valuable ſtores in our dock yards too ſtrong, leſt an enemy ſhould after deſtroying them acquire a poſt that under no circumſtances can be permanently maintained by him? Beſides how do detached forts contribute more to this danger than contracted works?

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The whole of this matter may ſhortly be reduced to the following queries:

1. Can our navy at all times be ſure to prevent an enemy from landing in force?

2. Can the preſent fortifications which are at Portſmouth and Plymouth (with the ſame garriſon and aſſiſtance that is ſuppoſed they may have) prevent an enemy landed in force and with heavy artillery from bombarding the dock yards?

3. Can any other works upon a contracted plan prevent a bombardment?

4. Can the effects of a bombardment, and red-hot ſhot, be prevented by the ridiculous means propoſed in the Short Eſſay?

5. Can any other means be found to prevent a bombardment than by detached works at a diſtance, ſo as to keep an enemy out of reach of throwing ſhot and ſhells into the dock yards with effect?

6. Can detached works be done cheaper, and is the object to be preſerved worth the expence?

7. Will

7. Will the force requiſite to defend the dock yards without works, be leſs than what may defend them with good fortifications?

It would be miſſpending time to anſwer queſtions ſo ſelf-evident as theſe.

There are ſome other traits ſcattered here and there in the Short Eſſay, which not coming under any particular head, have been reſerved for ſeparate conſideration.

The miſchievous tendency of this officer's doctrines are not confined to Great Britain. Speaking of the Weſt India iſlands, he ſays, *that it is impoſſible for the inhabitants to join in a defenſive war againſt an army even moderately ſtrong, without ſuffering a total deſtruction of their property.— That the greateſt number of the planters, therefore, are convinced, by ſad experience, that in ſuch caſes, it is generally eligible, if not abſolutely neceſſary for them to change their maſters without a ſtruggle, finding, that works can only protect them long enough againſt the enemy for the ruin of their plan-*

tations, and their own conſequent diſtreſs, and bankruptcy. He afterwards goes on to obſerve, *that it is not poſſible for Great Britain to furniſh the iſlands with garriſons ſufficient for protecting them even againſt ſlight attacks: That their principal, if not ſole protection, muſt come from our navy; and that it requires but a ſmall ſhare of diſcernment to foreſee, that this country muſt inevitably loſe the whole Weſt Indies with her naval ſuperiority,* (page 11 and 12).

If this officer was as intimately acquainted with the *chart de pais*, (or what any one who attempted to write French, would call *carte du Païs*,) he would know that the Weſt India iſlands, are of all countries the beſt adapted for being defended by fortification. The immenſe ſteepneſs of the hills, badneſs of roads, and large woods, afford in every one of them ſuch advantageous poſts, as with few fortifications, a ſmall garriſon may reſiſt a powerful attack; and if the ſiege can be prolonged for a couple of months, and becomes at all laborious, the climate will infallibly operate to the deſtruction of the beſieging army. Of this we had ſad experience

perience at the Havanna, which coſt us the lives of 11,000 land forces, and 4,000 ſeamen by ſickneſs; and had it not been for groſs ignorance in the conſtruction of the works at the Moro Caſtle, even the powerful army we had there, could never have taken the place.

What ſaved St. Lucia and Savanna from the attacks of the Count D'Eſtaing, but fortifications? Did not Brimſtone Hill, in the iſland of St. Chriſtopher's, with all its defects, want of preparation, without caſemates, and with but a ſmall garriſon, hold out many weeks againſt the Marquis De Bouillié? And if it had had the means of defence for a month longer, might it not have given an entire new turn to the war in that country?

England may not be able to afford conſiderable garriſons for the iſlands; but a very ſmall one with good works, and with a governor who will not ſuffer the treacherous conduct which the author of the Short Eſſay ſeems to recommend to the planters, *of changing their maſters without*

*without a ſtruggle**, there is little doubt but that each iſland may be enabled to repel an invader, without depending entirely on the fleet; which, if obliged to act to leeward, may not be able to beat up to windward again in time to ſave an iſland if an enemy on his landing meets with no works to retard his getting entire poſſeſſion.

It will not be neceſſary, nor perhaps the part of a good ſubject, to enter into an argument in print with the author of the Short Eſſay on the proper places for landing, the modes of attack, the beſt poſitions for firing our ſhips, and other details, into which that writer has entered ſo much at large for the information of the whole world. It will be much more prudent to ſuffer our enemies to follow this officer's plan of operations than to refute them. Military men who know the ground, may form ſome opinion of his judgment from the following remark. He repeats (after General Lloyd) *that Portſea*

* The governor of one of our iſlands declared, That he would deſtroy with his own hand the plantation of that man who countenanced the enemy.

lines

lines are againſt us, as they form a barrier for the enemy the moment he gets upon the iſland, againſt the country on the ſide of Ports Down. This remark is a juſt one, becauſe, from the very nature of lines, they can be a defence but the way they are turned. Theſe look towards Ports Down, and conſequently, whoever gets poſſeſſion of Portſea Iſland, is behind them, and has them in his favor, as there is no incloſed work in the rear to hinder poſſeſſion being taken of them. But the author of the Short Eſſay adds, *that when the large work which his Grace propoſes to erect near the middle of them is finiſhed, they will be ſtill more ſo.* Thus nonſenſe ſtalks abroad. If he knows any thing of the plan of this propoſed work, he muſt know that it is to be a fort incloſed on all ſides, purpoſely to prevent this defect of lines: that when it is erected, even if an enemy ſhould get poſſeſſion of Portſea Iſland, he could not lay hold of the lines; the interior part of which would be under the fire of this fort, and conſequently they could not be turned to his advantage. The fort itſelf, which could not be inveſted unleſs he was maſter both of Portſea Iſland and of Ports Down, would

would be very troubleſome to an enemy who had got into Portſea Iſland, and was beſieging Portſmouth. This work in the rear of his attack, preſerves to us the key of the iſland. Through this fort we could daily ſend freſh parties to attack his rear and diſturb his operations. If, on the other hand, an enemy attacks Portſea Iſland from Ports Down, every one knows the little dependence there is to be had on a long weak line, which if forced in any part, muſt be entirely abandoned; but when this fort is conſtructed in the center of them it will protect the lines from end to end; and they will be much better defended by troops who have a place of ſafety to which they can retire, and which can effectually cheque any purſuit if they are forced. It therefore becomes indiſpenſable for an enemy to take this fort before he can carry on any ſerious operation againſt Portſmouth on the Eaſtward ſide. And the reduction of a fort ſo advantageouſly ſituated, and which cannot be inveſted, is not ſo eaſy a buſineſs.

But one obſervation more on the ſubject of fortification in general. It has been

been ſaid of farming, that any man may be ſure not to err much if he will but look over the hedge and ſee what his neighbour is doing. Let us only look over the water and ſee what our neighbours there are doing. They have thought it worth their while to expend millions of money in fortifying their ſea ports of Toulon, Barcelona, Carthagena, Cadiz, Ferrol, and Breſt. Had they not, we might have cruſhed their navy in its infancy. But their works have protected it, and in the meridian of our power, when we were making enterprizes every where, we never thought of attacking Breſt, though ſo near to us. What but its fortifications prevented us? Let us then be as wiſe as France and Spain, and as it may in another war be our turn to be weakeſt at ſea, let us preſerve Plymouth and Portſmouth by fortifications.

But the determined reſolution of the author of the Short Eſſay to find fault with every thing that the preſent Maſter General has done, does not lead him only to ſupport his arguments with bad reaſoning; he does not heſitate groſsly to

to misrepresent facts; and amongst others he asserts, that *at South Sea Castle, his Grace in* 1782, *caused several casemates of brickwork to be made for cannon, and contrived them so very injudiciously, that the guns in them cannot fire, as they ought, towards the buoy of the spit, without recoiling against their sides, and either soon shaking them down, or oversetting with their own carriages, and maiming the artillery men employed in working them.* That *it surely argues a strange degree of inconsistency, first to add to the works of a place and in a short time afterwards to talk seriously of pulling the whole down and erecting a new one.* That *there is no end to public expenditure with a person who is so wavering and inconsistent in his resolutions*, (page 89 and 90). Now let us see how this fact really stands. These casemates against musketry from the tops of ships (which can come close to the fort) were to cover the guns on the old platform of the battery, the direction of which could not be changed without an immense expence. In the alterations of this fort proposed by Colonel Archer some years ago, the direction of this battery was necessarily left as it is; so

ſo that if the direction of the guns is defective, it is the fault of the engineer in the time of Queen Elizabeth, not of the preſent Maſter General. However it ſo happens that ſome doubts having been expreſſed, whether theſe ſlight caſemates would ſtand the ſhock of the guns when fired with ſhot, the Maſter General gave directions laſt ſummer for their being tried with ſhot in his preſence, and that of the Lieutenant and Surveyor General of the Ordnance. Major Wood conducted the experiments. The 32 pounders under the caſemates were repeatedly fired with ſhot. Not a brick was diſplaced by the concuſſion of air; although there was no wind, the ſmoke cleared away, and cauſed no impediment: The guns did not recoil againſt their ſides; they were not overſet with their own carriages; nor was any artillery man maimed or any ways hurt: And as to the direction, the only doubt was that of hitting and ſpoiling the buoy; to avoid which, directions were given to aim to the right and left of it. The ſhot went on both ſides the buoy, and grazed on the water far beyond it. Theſe are ſtubborn facts. And it is no leſs certain that the

ſea which has undermined the foundation of the battery at South Sea Caſtle, and cauſed a great part of the wall to fall in ſince theſe caſemates were erected in 1782 has given riſe to the idea of pulling the whole caſtle down, and rebuilding another work upon a more modern conſtruction a little farther from the water, rather than purſue the expenſive and ineffectual attempts of reſiſting the ſea by piles and breakwaters: eſpecially as the old form of the caſtle is too defective to deſerve ſo much expence. The author of the Short Eſſay muſt therefore find ſome other proof of the levity and inconſiſtency with which he charges the preſent Maſter General. Nor will the charge of his conſidering ſubjects again and again before he carries them into execution; his readineſs to alter his plans, in order to admit of improvements; his endeavours to pick up what information he can from *Montalembert*'s new ſyſtem of fortification, or of his adopting covered *caponier* defences to remedy the blunders of others, be deemed by *real* engineers to be ſuch unpardonable faults as they ſeem to be in the eyes of this author.

But

But indeed few eſcape his cenſures; ſelf conceit ſpares neither friends nor foes. The oldeſt generals and ableſt commanders muſt ſmart under the laſh of this practitioner genius; he has found out that *a wavering inconſiſtency marked all the ſteps of the conductors of the American war. General Burgoyne by ſuffering the enemy to act on his line of penetration was forced to retreat and even to lay down his arms. Lord Cornwallis and his army, without atchieving any thing material were brought into a ſimilar predicament. Whoever directed the works at Chatham had not the leaſt ſenſe or diſcernment. Whoever planned the new works round Portſmouth Common, made them terminate on the left by a great deal too near the dock yard. Their erection was one of the moſt fooliſh things that Parliament ever aſſented to, for works might have been erected at a tenth part of the expence which they have occaſioned already, that would anſwer the purpoſe of protecting it much better than they do.* The late Maſter General is alſo involved in the cenſures thrown on the works erected during his adminiſtration, and for his continuing the plans of the preſent Maſter

General

General (as he certainly did) when he returned to office.

But I will now take leave of the author of the Short Eſſay in the words of Aaron Monçeca to Jacob Brito.

Adieu Mon cher Jacob, *Dieu te préſerve de la rage, d'être auteur, et de parler de tout, ſans rien ſavoir.*

And, as I know our author does not underſtand French, I will give him a tranſlation which *he* will underſtand.

A good voyage to you my Dear James, God preſerve you from the rage of ſcribbling, and of talking about every thing without underſtanding any thing.

Let us return for one moment to a much more important conſideration than the author of the Short Eſſay—to the ſecurity of our dock yards. Let not the neglected pride or diſappointed ſelf intereſt which have dictated that performance operate on the minds of any to reject the propoſed

propoſed plans from ſimilar motives; let not the country gentlemen to whom it is addreſſed, nor the country at large, either refuſe from prejudice, or admit from partiality; let them make uſe of their own underſtandings, and not be miſled by others. It requires no profeſſional knowledge to comprehend, that if the guns at Gibraltar, could at the diſtance of 1000 yards ſo often hit the ſmall object of a floating battery, a whole dock yard which is many hundred times larger, can ſcarcely be miſſed at the ſame diſtance; and that if all the precautions that were taken, with plenty of water ready at hand, could not prevent the entire deſtruction in a few hours of the floating batteries by red-hot ſhot thrown into them, large magazines and ſtore-houſes of hemp, pitch, cordage, and other combuſtibles, could not eſcape their effect for many days and nights ſucceſſively. The moſt common information will tell us that none of the preſent works will keep an enemy even at that diſtance, and that the new works are calculated to prevent their getting with artillery nearer than three miles. Plain common ſenſe can determine which is prefer-

able

able. It has been ſhewn that the new works can be executed in a very ſhort time if thought neceſſary. The whole expence of them will be £.536,000; but all this will not be ſaved, if a more contracted plan is adopted; for not only the 101,000 for old works muſt be expended, but much more, in order to render them leſs defective than they are; not above 3 or 400,000 will therefore probably be ſaved, perhaps nothing; and the only queſtion is, whether it is wiſer at once to adopt an effectual ſyſtem with our eyes open as to the ſort of expence it will amount to, or to ſuffer ourſelves, under the deceitful appearance of a ſaving, to be drawn by degrees into perhaps as much expence in the end, which after all will not anſwer the intended purpoſe. It is but too true that immenſe ſums of money have been ſquandered in fortifications. Above £.900,000 have been laviſhed in England during the laſt war, and have given us no ſolid protection for our dock yards. But is this a reaſon for objecting to any fortifications? Becauſe there has been paſt miſmanagement, ought we to refuſe future good management? True wiſdom will not ſay

ſo,

ſo. Paſt abuſes are a very good reaſon for requiring that information on the ſubject which the preſent Maſter General and Board of Ordnance have given to Parliament, but there can be no reaſon for refuſing to truſt to our own informed judgment, nor can there be any difficulty in deciding, whether the general ſyſtem of diſtant or near defences is beſt calculated to protect the dock yards from being burnt. We know the expence, we have only to determine whether the object be worth it. That object is not only the preſervation of the naval arſenals, and the fatal conſequences that muſt enſue from their loſs, but alſo the preventing the attempt, which even if unſucceſsful, muſt be attended with much riſk to public credit, and certainty of great public and private detriment. This country has happily been long diſuſed to a ſcene of war, but no man can foretel the conſequences of its becoming expoſed to that worſt of all calamities. Ineffectual works afford a temptation to an enemy to put theſe conſequences to the tryal: effectual works prevent the attempt, and promiſe a continuance of that

happy

happy ſtate of tranquility which ſeems to be ſo eſſential to us in our preſent circumſtances, and which no real friend to his country would wiſh to ſee put to the ſmalleſt hazard.

FINIS.